

When You're Happy, I'm Happy

Contributed by Norman Vincent Peale

"When You're Happy, I'm Happy"

By
Norman Vincent Peale

Not too long ago, on a bitter-cold winter night, I arrived at the airport, finally got a taxi and headed for home. I have to admit that the weather and the consequent inconveniences of travel were beginning to put me in a less than ecstatic mood.

The taxi driver turned on the meter and we were on our way. I looked at the meter and just above it was a slogan button which read, "When you're happy, I'm happy." A few inches to the right of that button was another identical button. I guess the purpose was to make sure the message would really sink in. And sink in it did, because even though I was tired and a bit miserable, I began feeling better.

"When you're happy, I'm happy." That little slogan is basic and so true. When you think of your loved ones, your family and your friends, you realize how true it is. When you receive a sincere smile, you're inclined automatically to smile. By the same token, when you encounter unhappiness, it's just as catching. You begin to feel low yourself.

So the key to that slogan "When you're happy, I'm happy" is to make sure you are doing everything possible to see to it that the people around you are joyful.

I'd like to ask you to try an experiment. Write down the names of the most important people in your life, important on a personal level, a social level, or a business level. Then take each individual name and make a list of ways you might contribute toward that person's happiness in life.

I'm sure the first name would be that of your husband or your wife, or if you're not married, your closest relative or friend. If you have trouble starting a list of ways to increase that person's happiness, begin with a sincere warm greeting the next time you see them. After that beginning, ideas for promoting happiness will come to mind faster than you can write them down. You'll be amazed at how quickly that list will grow.

Now take each idea and think how that idea can boomerang from another person's happiness and make you happy also. By so doing, you will have your own happiness by making other people happy. You might even say it's an unselfish way of being selfish.

By the time you've finished with your entire list of people that are important in your life, you'll have your own invaluable formula for real happiness.

(from a newspaper column by Norman Vincent Peale titled "Confident Living". This article is from a newspaper published in San Diego County, California in 1970)